

TWO

LETTERS,

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF A

REVIVAL OF RELIGION

IN

W A L E S.

AND UNTO HIM SHALL THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE BE.
GEN. xlix. 10.

AND THE LORD ADDED TO THE CHURCH DAILY SUCH AS
SHOULD BE SAVED. ACTS ii. 47.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY HUGH INGLIS.

SOLD BY J. CAMPBELL, MERCHANT, GRASS-MARKET.

M.DCC.XCII.

LETTER

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the matter of the
estate of the late John Smith, deceased. I am sorry to hear of the death of your friend and neighbor, and
trust that his soul may rest in peace. I have been unable to find the will of the deceased, and I am
sorry to say that I have not been able to locate the executor of the estate. I am, however, doing
all in my power to locate him, and I will keep you advised of any progress I make. I am, Sir,
very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. B. Smith

P R E F A C E.

THE Editor was favoured with a copy of the first of the following Letters by a friend. The perusal of it excited a desire to receive a more particular information, upon a subject which cannot but be interesting to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. He accordingly took the liberty to address a letter to Mr. Charles; and was favoured with the Second Letter in return.

Persuaded in his own mind, that the publication of them would not only tend to the consolation of the disciples of Jesus in their present pilgrimage, but might also, in the divine mercy, eventually produce an awakening among others, who are now rolling upon the beds of carnal security, he has ventured to lay them before the public; not, however, without taking the advice of some Christian friends, who fully coincided with him respecting the propriety of publishing them.

He cannot doubt that all those who have known and tasted that the Lord is gracious, will receive with pleasure the information, that the gospel is sent *in power*, in the *Holy Ghost*, and in much assurance, to any individual. But how much will their joy be increased, in learning that almost every inhabitant of a considerable *district* have appeared, at least, to be alarmed; and that in a very considerable number, the most evident signs of conversion appear?

It will give additional pleasure to the serious Reader, that he will find nothing in the following Letters but what is strictly scriptural. The work

does not appear to be founded on enthusiasm; but to be the genuine effect of a plain simple declaration of the terrors of the divine law, and the infinite blessings conveyed by the covenant established in the blood of the Mediator, brought home to the consciences of sinners by the almighty power of the Divine Spirit.

The publication of these Letters appears to be peculiarly proper in this place, at the present time, when we reflect upon the Laodicean spirit which too much pervades almost every class of religious professors. This is indeed a common complaint among serious persons: but, perhaps, instead of lamenting the coldness and indifferency of our fellow Christians, the proper exercise of each individual ought to be, to search his own heart for the cause of that lukewarmness which is in himself; and to avail himself of every mean of divine grace, with which we are so highly favoured, that his love to God and man may be increased.

The Editor does not expect that the fashionable world will be pleased in the perusal of the following Letters. To such he would only say, that if they will compare the contents with the holy oracles of God, they will find, that such as the Letters describe, must be the effect of the preached gospel to all to whom it *savingly* comes.

If there are any who profess the name of Jesus Christ, who should find themselves disposed to censure any smaller matters contained in the following account, he is persuaded, that they, at least, will receive some satisfaction from the knowledge, that a considerable number of persons, who were living in the most gross carelessness, totally unconcerned about a future state, and apparently without God in the world, have been awakened to a serious consideration of their own awful state, and
appear

appear to have received the important truths of the gospel.

The Editor is aware, that there are serious persons who look with a jealous eye upon every extraordinary appearance of this kind. To such he would recommend, a candid consideration of the following extract of a Letter, which he lately received from the Rev. Mr. John Newton, Rector of St Mary, Woolnoth, London.

“ The revival at Bala demands thankfulness.
 “ The Lord, according to his sovereign pleasure,
 “ now and then, vouchsafes, such seasons of re-
 “ freshment as draw the attention of many. But
 “ hitherto they have usually been local and tem-
 “ porary. I remember one in the west of Scot-
 “ land, almost fifty years ago. The most exten-
 “ sive, I think, took place in America, about the
 “ same time; and was first observed under Mr.
 “ Edwards’ ministry, at Northampton. There
 “ is generally much good done in such seasons of
 “ power—but we must not expect that every ap-
 “ pearance will answer our wishes. There are
 “ many more blossoms upon a tree in spring than
 “ there will be apples in autumn. Yet we are
 “ glad to see blossoms; because we know, that if
 “ there are no blossoms there can be no fruit.

“ When such sudden and general awakenings take
 “ place among people, who were ignorant and
 “ unacquainted with scripture, they are more or
 “ less attended with blemishes, and misguided
 “ zeal. The enemy is watchful to sow tares
 “ among the wheat. Thus it has always been.
 “ It was so in the apostle’s day. Offences arise;
 “ and they who wish to find something at which
 “ they may stumble and cavil, by the righteous
 “ judgment of God, have what they wish for.

“ But they who love the Lord, and have a regard
 “ for precious souls, will rejoice in the *good* that
 “ is really done, and can account for the occa-
 “ sional mixtures from the present state of hu-
 “ man nature.

“ That the good work at Bala may flourish,
 “ and extend to London and Edinburgh (if the
 “ Lord please), is my sincere prayer, as I doubt
 “ not it is yours.

“ I am your affectionate

Coleman-street Buildings,
 Feb. 20, 1792.

“ JOHN NEWTON.”

The Reader will perceive that Mr. Newton does not appear as the vindicator of the work at Bala, with many of the circumstances relative to which he is probably unacquainted; but that his observations apply to every extraordinary event of *this* nature. The Editor solicited, and obtained the permission of his reverend Correspondent to publish it, as being fully expressive of his own sentiments.

Edinburgh, July 1792.

TWO

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

Bala, in Wales, Sept. 1791.*

*Copy of a Letter from the Rev. Mr. CHARLES to
the Rev. Mr. J—s, of C—T—N.*

Dear Sir,

YOU inquired about the state of the church in poor Wales. I have nothing but what is singularly favourable to relate. We have lately had a very comfortable association at Pwellhely. Some thousands attended more than ever was seen there before. Here, in our town of Bala, for this month past, we have had a very great, powerful, and glorious out-pouring of the Spirit of our God on the people in general, especially children and young people. The state and welfare of the soul is become the general concern of the country. Scores of the wildest and most inconsiderate of our young people, of both sexes, have been awakened. Their convictions are so very clear, powerful, and deep, in some instances, that they were for a time brought to the brink of despair, and confined to their beds, without any other complaint. Their consolations also have been equally strong. If the Lord God is graciously pleased to continue his

* A small town in Merioneth-shire, North Wales.

work

work for a few months to come, as it has prevailed for these weeks past, Satan's kingdom will be entirely in ruins in this neighbourhood. Ride on, ride on, O thou King of saints! is the fervent cry of my soul day and night; and, in this, I doubt not but you will join me.—I verily believe the King of Zion is about giving the kingdom of darkness a dreadful shake; for he takes off the very pillars of it. Those who were foremost in wickedness and rebellion, are now some of the foremost in crying for mercy, and seeking salvation in the blood of the Lamb. Our God has laid hold on many of the ringleaders in Satan's service; and they are now crying aloud, Lord, forgive. It is a pleasant and a very easy matter to preach the gospel of the kingdom here at this time; for the word comes in power, and in the Holy Ghost; and is found mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds. Divine truths have their own infinite weight and importance in the minds of the people. Beams of divine light, together with irresistible energy, accompany every truth delivered. It is admirable to see how the stoutest hearts are bended, and the hardest melted down with fire from heaven. I would not have been without seeing what I have lately seen, no, not for the world. I clearly see that the Lord can make a millennium of it in a short time. These are showers that precede the great storm, which will entirely overturn the kingdom of darkness. These are the blessed tidings I have to relate to you, dear brother, respecting poor Wales: and the blessing of God attends the charity-schools here in a singular manner.—Children, who aforetime were like jewels buried in rubbish, without knowing their work, now appear with divine lustre, and transcendent beauty. Little children, from six to twelve years of age,

age, are deeply affected, astonished, and overpowered with divine truths. Their minds, day and night, are filled with nothing else. They talk of them when awake in their beds, and dream of them in their sleep. All, I say, are matters of fact; and I have not exaggerated them in the least degree, and have related but a small part of the whole.

LETTER II.

Letter from the Rev. Mr. CHARLES to the Editor.

Dear Sir,

CONTINUAL absence from home, about my Divine Master's business, is the only reason of my not answering your kind Letter sooner. This will form to you a sufficient apology. By this time, perhaps, you have seen, in Priestley's * Magazine, another Letter respecting the late work here.—That it is a work of God, I am not left to doubt in the least degree. It carries along with it every scriptural satisfactory evidence that we can possibly desire: such as, deep conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; great reformation of manners; great love for, and delight in the word of God, in prayer, in spiritual conversation, and divine ordinances. These, in *particular*, among *young* people, occupy the place, and employ the time, that was spent in vain diversions and amusements. No harps, but the *golden* harps that St. John speaks of, have been played upon, in this neighbourhood,

* Mr. Timothy Priestley.

for several months past. The *craft* is not-only in *danger*, but entirely destroyed and abolished. The *little stone* hath *broke to pieces* and *consumed* all these ensnaring hindrances.—But I am far from expecting, that all those who have experienced divine influences are savingly wrought upon, and soundly converted. If that were the case, all the country would be converted; for, at one time, there were very few in it but what felt an awful impression, from the hand of God, upon their minds, producing foreboding fears respecting their future existence in another world. It was a most solemn time indeed! I never saw a livelier picture of the state of people's minds in the day of judgment, according to their respective conditions. That awful dispensation lasted but few weeks: but the ministration of the word is still lively and powerful; and fresh awakenings take place, though not so *numerous* as at first. Perhaps it will not be known till the judgment-day, *how many* of these new converts are actually brought into a state of salvation; nor *who* they are: but hitherto, we have every reason to be thankful for the good profession they continue to make. Among so many, there must be a great variety; and we may have better hopes of some than others: but hitherto, *none* have “turned away from feeding besides the “Shepherd's tent.”

As to the further spread of the work—the prospect in our country, in general, is very pleasing. In Carnarvon-shire and Anglesey, congregations are very numerous, and very large. Thousands flock together at the sound of the gospel-trumper, and hear with great earnestness and attention. Awakenings also are frequent. But as to any extraordinary out-pouring of the Spirit, there is none at present but in two places besides this neighbourhood;

hood; and, in those places, it does not carry with it the strong marks of power irresistible, and convincing demonstration, which has attended it here. The report of what was going on here, has awakened the attention of all the country; and filled the churches every where with a spirit of thanksgiving and prayer. I have hardly a doubt but it will spread: the beginning was so glorious, that I cannot suppose but it precedes great things. The churches every where are, if I may so say, *in labour*; and I cannot but expect that a “man-child is to be born.” They are prepared; they are praying; they are waiting and longing for his coming! He has indeed already done great things in this principality. Within these fifty years there have been five or six very great awakenings. A land of darkness, and of the shadow of death, hath seen great light. But O may we live to see still greater things!—Your saying, “that a similar revival took place in your country, about fifty years ago,” enkindled a spirit of prayer in me for the return of your *Jubilee*. I am persuaded, that unless we are favoured with frequent revivals, and a strong powerful work of the Spirit of God, we shall, in a great degree, degenerate, and have only a “name to live.” Religion will loose its vigour; the ministry will hardly retain its lustre and glory; and iniquity will of consequence abound. I am far from supposing this to be the case in your country: I am only speaking of the thing itself. Scotland, I know, has, in ages past, been a most highly favoured country: I hope it still continues so; but I am perfectly ignorant of the present state of religion in it. May the good Lord hasten the blessed time when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!—I beg my love to all Christian friends with you; I beg an
interest

interest in all your prayers. Blessed be God that I have an Advocate with the Father ! He sees, commiserates, and can succour and relieve as necessity requires. From this joyful consideration alone proceeds my resolution and courage to go on. You may well suppose, that whilst God is amongst us, Satan is not asleep. He is alive, and going about with his usual diabolical disposition. In the church, or out of the church, he is always plotting some mischief. I would wish to be watchfully observing all his motions and machinations. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet *shortly*.—I am your unworthy companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, and

your obedient humble servant,

Bala, May 2, 1792.

THOMAS CHARLES,

F I N I S.